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ABSTRACT

The author lists, from recent professional writings, 34 prevailing but contradictory attitude statements divided into two parts relating to students and student personnel. Twenty entries deal with clientele, campus, and classes; fourteen pertain to personnel services and the practicing professional. Before adjustments in these or other paradoxical situations can be made, each student personnel worker has to assess his degree of commitment toward resolving the problem areas which pertain to him. Only an honest self-reflection will, in the end, promote constructive change in the internal workings of the student personnel machinery on each campus. (Author/PC)

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STUDENTS AND STUDENT PERSONNEL IN THE 1970's: A PROMISE OF PARADOX?

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Students and Student Personnel in the 1970's: A Promise of Paradox?

Institutions of higher learning in this country have never wanted for censors and critics. Student personnel, as a visible component, has the precedent of being held under close examination and, whether proactive or reactive, has received its share of condemnation. A review of the professional writings in the late 1960's and early 1970's revealed that several efforts have been made to critically reflect, in paradoxical and ironic statements, the broad aspects of higher education, the campus political scene, and the students themselves.

The overall post high school panorama was depicted through the use of nonsequiturs and anomalies by Beeler and Eberle (1971, 1972), Brewster (1972), and Christ-Janer (1973). The university was reviewed in such terms by Schick (1971). The campus political climate was likewise described by Rubenstein (1969), O'Neil (1971), and Myerhoff (1972). The student population was similarly examined by Beeler (1973) and the nursing profession by Spingarn (1974).

Those who offers such critiques still far outnumber those who provide concrete recommendations for making more responsive the higher educational system. Yet, the final responsibility for generating positive

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responses and implementing important changes to offset such criticism rests with the professional leader and his staff members.

Provided here are 34 incongruent and contradictory statements divided into two parts related to students and student personnel. The situation is much the same. An observer has supplied 20 entries dealing with the clientele, campus, and classes and 14 items pertaining to personnel services and the practicing professional. Before adjustments in these or other paradoxical situations can be made, each student personnel worker has to assess his degree of commitment toward resolving the ones that pertain to him. Only an honest self-reflection will, in the end, promote constructive changes in the internal workings of the student personnel machinery on each campus.

The major source of this collection of statements evolved from the writer's formal and informal contacts with various institutions, teaching of courses in college student personnel administration, in and out-of-class discussions with students, and association with student personnel officers and counselor educators. A few of the entries were prompted by a reaction to the literature that increasingly abounds on the topic of higher education.

It is recognized that these generalized observations are not unilaterally applicable to all students, all campuses, and all student personnel workers. That is convincingly true when it is considered that students spend in college just five percent of their expected life span, that varied personnel staffs and services exist, and that each institution has

indigenous and idiosyncratic qualities.

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The Changing Student and His Environment

To provide the student personnel officer an opportunity to add to his perspective, and hopefully to better interpret the paradoxical pronouncements that follow, an abbreviated review of the changing student life style and campus climate has been included. Some of the changes are more observable and documentable than others, and since the students serve as the raison d'etre for student personnel a contrasting style was used.

Reminiscences of the era of the 1950's and 1960's are currently being commercially exploited through nostalgic appeals like the movie American Graffitti, the television series The Happy Days, the off-broadway play Moonchildren, the road-show Grease, the group Sha Na Ha, and numerous "oldies but moldies" record parties. The remembered mid-1960's quote of Clark Kerr that "the three major administrative problems on the campus are sex for the students, athletics for the alumni, and parking for the faculty" has largely been displaced by more troublesome matters.

Our colleges and universities are for the first time inhabited by adults as students rather than as minors. Sociologist Andrew Greeley reminds us that one of the iron laws of changing college generations is that "nothing is more different than comparing last year's seniors with this year's freshmen." This is borne out by the annual survey of freshmen students conducted by the American Council on Education which revealed that the fall 1972 group tended to be more conservative, more concerned about academic work and serious about pursuing it than its predecessors.

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Coverage of the youth cult in the popular press has subsided in the past year or so. Esquire magazine for the first time did not have a "back-to-college" feature in its fall issue; likewise for Playboy. A student-oriented quarterly magazine College made its appearance last summer and is a reminder of the earlier Moderator. Environmentally concerned publications have faced financial troubles; gone are Whole Earth Catalog, Clear Creek, and Natural Life Styles while others are hanging on by a thread. Many campus newspapers like the Michigan Daily and the Daily Californian (UC-Berkeley), have gone independent and moved off campus.

We have seen the transformation in student labels that mostly reflect a Bohemian life style. "Beatniks" (with a few "flower children") switched to "Hippies" and to "Yippies" (with a few "street people") and now to assorted "Jesus Freaks." A look at the college wardrobe reveals it is increasingly being accented with a neater "non-grub" look; a stark contrast to the bleached-out denim, Army-Navy surplus, and avant-garde clothing.

Onetime prominent personalities have also faded. Campus activists like Tom Hayden, Mario Savio, Mark Rudd, and Angela Davis, to name a few, are now in Bob Dylan's "Don't trust anybody over 30" category. Campus bards like J. R. Tolkien, Rod McKuen, and Ferlinghetti have been replaced by the likes of Richard Brautigan, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., and most recently Carlos Castaneda and his favored Don Juan. The music sounds have shifted from acid rock and anti-establishment and social consciousness lyrics to folk rock, Black blues, and strains of mountain bluegrass. Performers like Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin are no longer and the Dave Clark Five, Peter, Paul and Mary and The Supremes have been replaced

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by entertainers like The Carpenters, Helen Reddy, and (he) Alice Cooper.

Social and recreational patterns of students have also changed. Experimentation with drugs, particularly marijuana, is for many students "old hat." They were exposed to that phenomenon as long ago as their junior high school years. Current statistics reveal a substantial increase in the consumption of alcholic beverages by college aged adults; a similar rise in use of tobacco is also reported. In fact, the combination of "grass" and "booze" has prompted the coining of the term "alkey-dope-o's" to describe pdople who intake both. Yet, transcendental meditation, yoga, and other Far Eastern influences have entirely replaced the drug scene for some. The occult sciences are also rapidly gaining in popularity.

More visible changes on the campuses can be provided. R.O.T.C. programs are being returned to many institutions; recently both Yale and Princeton reinstituted their programs. Since both universities were the scene of intense confrontations only a few years ago, the return seems to hold some significance. The Center for the Study of Violence established in the mid 1960's at Brandies University has been closed. We have also witnessed the "de-generation" of love beads, the peace sign, and the clenched fist and the decline of Woodstock-type festivals, the underground press, and the free university. Black power has turned into rainbow power.

Another prominent example of change is the renaissance of interest and membership in Greek organizations. The all-campus extravaganza is beginning to reappear through the successful promotion of auditorium entertainment. Homecoming parades have more entries and are longer. Students

are going to football games again which was very big in the 1950's and not so cool in the 1960's. Other traditional activities are also regaining popularity after a setback. Perhaps historian Frederick Rudolph is right in stating that "the most sensitive barometer of what is going on at the colleges is the extracurriculum."

Alterations in student housing patterns have occurred through the increase of available coeducational housing and apartment-type residences and a general liberalizing of visitation rights and closing hours. College operated units now have varied contract options and include provisions for moveable furniture, refrigerator and television rentals, and even the wielding of paint brushes by students to decorate their residence hall room. Off-campus housing has increasingly come under the scrutiny of student-operated legal services with support from student tenant unions.

No profile of the changing college student and his environment, however brief, would be representative without knowledging the climate of protest and related activism. A return to the normalcy of the early 1960's would be a premature prediction, but we have seen a "cooling of the campus." The clouded suspicion between administrators and student leaders has been reduced largely through the voice of reason. Opportunities for increased student involvement in the decision-making machinery, particularly in curricular matters, has helped this reconciliation considerably. Promoting change by working within and through the system, which is now more understanding and sensitive to student needs, appears to be in process.

At least three major influences underlie and affect these shifts and

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changes in student conduct and campus melieu: (1) the abolishment of the military draft, and the end of American active involvement in Vietnam and the return of U. S. Servicemen; (2) the continued decline of the concept of in loco parentis, and the lowering of the age of majority and adulthood from 21 to 18 in about half of the states; and (3) the depressed job market which has prompted a more serious approach to academics as well as a questioning of the need for a college education and its overall personal value and economic worth.

One sentiment that permeates this brief portrait of the contemporary college student and his environs is represented in a comment by Beatle John Lennon in 1971: "The dream is over.... I'm talking about the generation thing. It's over, and we gotta...get down to so-called reality." Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A'Changin'" theme did not fully materialize but, almost in reverse ten years later, does reflect the shift of students to a new realism. For indeed, the times have changed.

Part I--College Students

This section deals with some of the prevailing attitudes displayed by students and towards them by others. Also provided are some inconsistencies that pertain to the student's academic life.

1. Today's typical student is somewhat older than his predecessors of earlier generations; he is also psychologically and physically more mature. While the age of biological maturity has been declining at the rate of about six months every decade, the period of social adolescence and youth stage has been increasingly prolonged particularly for the college student

population.

2. Many former students (dropouts, stopouts) are living in youth ghettos on the fringes of colleges and universities. Some of these "non-students," who at one time were "rippin' off" the establishment (local businesses including the college bookstore), are now "rippin' off" their brothers and sisters by stripping student cars in parking lots, stealing bicycles, books and other academic wares, and by pushing pot and hard drugs in student unions and residence halls.

3. Many of the same students who were shouting "Get the Pigs (city and campus policemen) off the campus" just two years ago, now, for the most part, are saying: "We want more protection and security furnished by the college." These additional safeguards may best be provided by increasing the number of campus police officers available for surveillance duties.

4. The bright, idealistic generation of student in the 1960's that was so ambitious to stop the Vietnam War and overhaul, if not overthrow, the political process, were remarkably muted over the affairs of the Watergate, the first resignation of a vice-president in over 125 years, and the possible impeachment of the president. Reaction on the campus came mostly in the form of a coat-and-tie expression--the circulation of petitions, placement of paid political advertisements in local newspapers, student editorials, and in-class discussions on these matters.

5. One of the long standing goals of the "under 21" population has been gaining eligibility to vote. The 26th Amendment to the Constitution

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now guarantees that right in national elections. Of an estimated 11 million people aged 18 to 20 who were recently franchised, only slightly less than 60 percent (6.4 million) said they were registered. That still represented enough ballots on Election Day to emancipate America from the insensitivity, apathy, and squaredom that many of them felt was the prevailing mood in this country. Yet, fewer than one-half (48 percent or 5.3 million) of eligibles within the age group bothered to vote (compared with 71 percent of the "Over 45's") despite the newly found opportunity to voice their real concerns, and despite the extraordinary attention paid them by both major political parties.

6. Antiwar feelings and sentiments among students during the 1930's and 1960's helped to sustain active radical student movements; similar tendencies among students during the 1940's and 1950's had no parallel organizational strength. These differentiated efforts by student activists apparently has little or no effect on the returning veterans seeking or resuming a higher education. The proportion of military ex-servicemen who took advantage of the G. I. Bill's educational benefits following the Korean police action (50 percent) increased from those taking such benefits after World War II (35 percent), but was not as high as veterans cashing in on this educational opportunity during and following the Vietnam conflict (70 percent)

7. Without the help of fanatical alumni and other boosters (those who are firm allies of a winning coach and implacably foes of a losing coach), it would be doubtful that any college or university could suit-up a

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championship team in a major sport like football or basketball. Without the demands and pressures to produce a consistently winning record created by these enthusiasts, it would likely not be necessary.

8. The college athlete has been given almost full certainty that his four years of competitive eligibility will be protected through the use of "brain coaches," "redshirting," and customary payment for his room and board, books, and some "laundry money." Yet, no guarantee has been provided that the same individual's four-year tenure on the campus will culminate in a bachelor's degree in anything.

9. Student campus leaders have had to cope with an intractable set of circumstances. The accomplishment of their political goals necessistates efficient, calculating organization. Yet, these very qualities and actions are antithetical to the way life, in their view, is to be lived--spontaneously, openly, for its own sake, for the here and now.

10. One of the major goals of student activism a few years ago was an increase in voice and participation in various institutional governing councils and committees by serving as advisory, consultive, or voting members. Today, the colleges are not few that have increased the opportunities for students to serve in such representative capacities; yet, the colleges are many that have existing vacancies within their governing network due to a renewed lack of student response and interest.

11. Campus activists of the 1960's,for the most part, won a greatly increased role in the traditional academic governance system for future students. Yet, now, many students are likely to be left out as professional

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negotiations (collective bargaining), prompted by the growth of faculty unionism, relegates more and more campus decisions to the bargaining table where students lack direct representation.

12. In the present dynamics of college and university organization we find, on the one hand, that students (along with some faculty) who demand participation in only top echelon decision-making bodies may discover that, on the other hand, they have actually created a highly-centralized structure which either reduces the autonomy of their institution or has little or no effect on it.

13. In a leading opinion poll conducted five years ago, 72 percent of respondents from a cross-section of American households saw campus demonstrators who engaged in protest activism as being harmful, as compared with 48 percent of respondents in 1973 who felt this way. College presidents who are too lenient with student protestors are now ranked higher than student activists as a threat factor on campuses, having scored 57 percent in 1969 but still incensing 53 percent of the public canvassed in 1973.

14. Just when ethnic-minority groups (Chicanos, Oriental-Americans, Native Americans, Blacks) and other disadvantaged groups are beginning to master the system of college admissions, they are being told that the system is changing, and they are encouraged to investigate external degree programs like the College Level Examination Program, University Without Walls, Campus-Free College, and other nontraditional learning opportunities.

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15. Many students select the public two-year college because of its low tuition, open admissions policy, proximity and, thus, savings in room and board costs. Presently, it is part of Black and Third World student rhetoric to label a community college education as "second-rate." Many students discount the education they get by claiming they get it "on the cheap" and that the institution admits virtually everyone.

16. Students are pressing for an educational environment that provides closer faculty contact and the addition of experiential components to their course of study. A personalized instructional approach may best be singly facilitated by a decrease in the teacher-student ratio and an increase in independent studies and seminars. Experiential dimensions may best be provided through internships, cooperative education, and other work-study combinations. All of these proposals land on academic ears at a time when administrators are being held responsible for producing additional credit hours by faculty and maintaining a lower student instructional cost among other austerity efforts that directly affect the educational budget.

17. Students are repeatedly reminded that the traditional premise on which academic and scholarly investigation has been based is the extensiveness of significant first-hand experience on the part of the professor. Yet, the bulk of the scholarly research and present literature on gerontology has been produced by people "who ain't never been there." And, students could find other courses that are exceptions to this; "The Psychology of Death and Dying" being a prominent one.

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18. Students largely support attempts in the academic community to deemphasize grading, sorting, and credentializing in favor of a return to the task of education. Yet, nontraditional grades on transcripts prompt difficulty in transferring to a second institution and admissions trouble for applicants to graduate-professional schools, the majority which show a strong preference for the conventional letter grade. The less standardized the grading system, the more an institution will rely on standardized test results, letters of recommendation, and reputation of the former institution attended, all of which may work to the disadvantage of the student.

19. Many community colleges bring about in two years significant changes in students with lower initial skill and marginal academic prowess. Yet, these two-year institutions are generally judged to be less effective than prestigious universities which do little more than admit highly able students and graduate them relatively undamaged four years later.

20. The best endowed institutions tend to use their grants, gifts, and bequests as a way of improving an already costly product--their graduates--and tend to charge their students the highest tuition instead of using the endowment as a way of making the education they provide available at a lower price to more students.

Part II--Student Personnel

This segment deals with some student services (admissions, counseling, activities, financial aid, and placement) and student personnel workers and educators. Hopefully, these observations will serve to refute

the suggestion that student personnel work is comparable to kissing; it is such an intensively satisfying and contenting life that few bother to examine it carefully.

1. All institutions of higher learning have been faced with the hardship problem of reflecting an equitable proportion of minority and disadvantaged groups in their student body. Admissions personnel have been assigned the difficult and expensive task of gaining and maintaining a representative student mix on their campuses. Yet, all institutions cannot truly achieve that enviable goal. In the final analysis, there simply are not enough college-bound admittees (Vietvets, Appalachian Whites, Chicanos, Native Americans, Blacks, etc.) to go around.

2. Almost all two-year colleges are expanding their recruitment outreach activities. The net effect, unfortunately, is likely to turn out similar to the consequences of the single-sex colleges that went coeducational. If only a few had made that step, they might have had a competitive edge over institutions that did not change format. However, nearly all institutions have become coeducational so the outcome has simply been a redistribution of students from the existing pool; the pool itself has not expanded to include new student clienteles.

3. At the same time that students are faced with choosing from more options during their post-secondary education, counseling and guidance services and personnel, from the student's point of view, are needed more than ever. Yet, when colleges are in a pecuniary pinch such as now, counseling centers and their staff are often regarded as expendable and are

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one of the first areas to be restricted in growth and occasionally are even cutback.

4. The student activities area is assumed to be an integral part of the educational process and a positive academic force on the campus. Attention is given to making opportunities available to students to develop their resources and realize their potential through the extracurriculum. Yet, in actual practice, many are the cases where the student government and judical groups on campus are staffed by outstanding students with favorable leadership resumes, the publications program is managed by former high school yearbook and newspaper editors, the debate and drama teams are composed of previous medal winners and Thespian champions, the various musical groups are staffed by competent musicians who have been previous content winners, and so on ad naseum.

5. In the late 1960's the venerable Greek System went into decline and was thought by many to be on its way out permanently as a part of the campus social scene. Many male and coed students failed to see any relevance in infantile groups that used irrelevant rituals and pledge chores. Nonetheless, there now is an upswing in Greek membership generated by a more serious sense of purpose and direction. Today there are more chapters of national fraternities on more campuses than ever before and a nationwide gain of members has been reported in each of the last three years.

6. The U. S. Office of Education has announced that it has now handled over 708 millions in total loans under the Federal Guaranteed Loan

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Program with just over one-third (260 millions) of the total going to vocational-technical students. Approximately 60,000 college and trade school students have defaulted on 55.2 millions in loans including the filing of bankruptcy proceedings at a time when their assets were at a minimum. Many would suspect that the campus activists of the late 1960's and their principle supporters would be heavy sources of these practices in retaliation against the establishment and the system. Yet, 75 percent of all failures to meet or complete educational loan payments involve trade, technical and vocational students.

7. A student who completes the four-year degree program with the bare minimum of course work and low grades is given employment and status preferable over the student who has mastered more content with higher grades but did not complete, perhaps for reasons beyond that individual's control, a baccalaureate degree.

8. Some students struggle to find something definite and unyielding against which to resist or criticize in hopes of prompting a confrontation, no matter how permissive and accepting the college environment, or how reasonable minded and understanding the college officials. Yet, many times when student personnel officers take a firm stand, the students view or accuse them of being perfect examples of the entrenched establishment.

9. Student personnel workers are increasingly oriented toward the central administration of the institution with their expanded managerial-business roles and responsibilities. Yet, to be effective, these professionals must maintain the welfare of their clients as their central and ultimate

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concern. What they are now witnessing is a reduction of contact with their primary constituency--the students.

10. If a student personnel worker is to be effective in reaching his purposes, he must work closely with students where they are located. Yet, most student personnel offices are clustered in a single building, often next to the central administration, which physically isolates the student personnel staff. This is the case at a time when many campuses are seeing an increase in the enrollment of minority and disadvantaged individuals who do not always have the built-in initiate, confidence or "know-how" to seek out the services that they need in a foreign environment.

11. A continuing point of debate in professional circles is the legitimacy of granting academic rank to college student personnel workers. The assumption is that teaching can only take place under the guise of the almighty credit hour and in the classroom. Faculty and some personnel professionals frequently overlook the fact that teaching by student personnel workers takes place through supervision of practica and internship students, by serving as resource people in various classes, by conducting non-credit human potential growth groups, by handling academic support services like remedial reading and study skills centers, and even by finding some time to teach a free university course.

12. Using their expertise for consulting on student personnel programs at other institutions is inviting and financially rewarding for student personnel educators. Many also serve as program evaluators and as counsel to chief student personnel officers. Today, nearly all student personnel

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programs are being directed to design and implement an accountability model for the services they offer. Yet, student personnel educators on these same campuses are rarely utilized, in any paid or unpaid consultive or evaluative capacity, in either the review, evaluation, or revision of existing student personnel programs.

13. Student personnel educators deal almost exclusively with graduate and advanced graduate students who are preparing to work as staff members with an undergraduate student population. Some professors even teach a course on the young adult or the American college student that deals with their life styles and subcultures. Yet, professors speak with personal authority and firsthandedness about a clientle, the undergraduates, with whom they have limited on-going contact and about whom they rarely have as students in their own classes.

14. Student personnel services are perhaps coming full circle. Some 75 years ago the first dean of men's position was initiated as an arm of the dean of academic affairs office. Today, we have witnessed several instances where student personnel services have been realigned and reorganized with the student personnel officer reporting to an upper echelon academic affairs officer.

It is hoped that these paradoxes, however carping or captious on the surface, have prompted momentary self-inventory and self-analysis by student personnel workers (and hopefully some college and university administrators, faculty members, and students), and will stimulated them to a course of action. For only through personal committed efforts will these

and other inconsistencies and incongruencies be rectified. Then, perhaps this comment by a Barnard College coed will be remedied: "I'm sick and tired of being potential all the time." While it is true that young people are on the road, that road is itself a place. We need always be aware that college students are important as much for what they are as for what they will become.

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